

**Remarks**

This paper is filed in response to the Office Action mailed April 27, 2007 in which the Examiner advised that claims 1-25 are subject to restriction under 35 U.S.C. § 121. Applicant has cancelled claims 2, 3, 5, 6, and 9-25 without prejudice or disclaimer and reserves the right to present these claims in one or more future applications.

By this paper, Applicant hereby elects the invention categorized by the Examiner in group "I" and encompassed by claims 1-11. Additionally, new claims 26-46 are drawn to methods for connecting a vessel to another vessel. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 26-46 are also drawn to the elected invention.

Applicant further elects Examiner-identified "Species I." Accordingly, Applicant requests that claims 7, 8, 37, and 38 be withdrawn, pending allowance of any generic claims from which these claims may depend. Additionally, Applicant requests that new claims 40-46 be withdrawn.

Please contact Applicant's undersigned attorney in the event that any remaining impediment to the prompt allowance of this application is found, which could be clarified by a telephonic interview, or which may be susceptible to being overcome by means of an Examiner's Amendment.

DATED this 29th day of October, 2007.

Respectfully submitted,

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